REMARKS

The foregoing Amendment and the following Remarks are submitted in response to the Office Action issued on March 23, 2006 in connection with the above-identified patent application, and are being filed within the three-month shortened statutory period set for a response by the Office Action.

Claims 1-8 and 12-16 remain pending in the present application. Claims 9-11 and 17 have been canceled. Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, and 12-14 have been amended. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added to the application by the Amendment.

The Examiner has rejected claims 12-16 under 35 USC § 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. In particular, the Examiner states that the claims are not directed to tangible subject matter inasmuch as the system recited could be tangible or intangible. Accordingly, Applicants have amended the claims to refer to a computer system, which is believed to be tangible. As a result, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 101 rejection.

The Examiner has also objected to claim 13 as being essentially a copy of claim 12. Accordingly, Applicants have amended claim 12 to correspond generally to claim 1, while claim 13 already corresponds generally to claim 5.

The Examiner has rejected the claims under 35 USC § 102 as being anticipated by Braumandl et al. (ObjectGlobe, VLDB Journal 10: 48-71 (2001)). Applicants respectfully traverse the § 102 rejection insofar as it may be applied to the claims as amended.

Independent claim 1 recites a method for a search framework to provide search functionality to a web server across at least two search providers. In the method, the search framework registers a first search method for performing searches on a first search provider and a second search method for performing searches on a second search provider. The search framework detects a request to the web server for a search on a selected search provider from among said first search provider and said second search provider. The selected search provider corresponds to a corresponding search method from among the first and second search methods. The search framework provides to the web server a ubiquitous search method for performing the search utilizing the corresponding search method, and

responds to a call from the web server to the ubiquitous search method by performing the search on the selected search provider utilizing the corresponding search method.

Independent claim 12 recites the subject matter of claim 1, albeit in the form of a computer system with the search framework.

Independent claim 5 recites subject matter similar to the method of claim 1 except that the request to the web server is for a search on the first search provider and also the second search provider, and the ubiquitous search method performs the search utilizing the first search method on the first search provider and the second search method on the second search provider.

Independent claim 13 recites the subject matter of claim 5, albeit in the form of a computer system with the search framework.

To summarize, in the present invention a web server can receive a search request that is to be directed to more than just one search provider. Instead, the search request can be directed to any one of a plurality of search providers, or can be directed to more than one of the plurality of search providers. However, it is to be appreciated that each search provider operates based on a different interface, and thus may receive a search request in a particular format, return search results in a particular format, and have particular options.

The web server cannot and should not be expected to know the particular interface requirements of every search provider, especially if the search providers can change on a regular basis. Accordingly, in the present invention, a search framework is provided, where the search framework is either a computing system or part of a computing system and in effect manages the search providers that can service a search request at the web server. In particular, the search framework for each available search provider registers same and in doing so collects and maintains all necessary interfacing information, and also provides same to the web server as needed.

Thus, if a search as received at a web server is to be directed to one or more search providers, the search framework detects same and determines a corresponding search method that is to be employed for each such service provider. The search framework then provides such search methods to the web server as a 'ubiquitous' search method for performing the search utilizing each such search method, and responds to a call from the web

server to the ubiquitous search method by performing the search on the selected search provider utilizing each corresponding search method.

To summarize, then, the search framework provides the call to the web server as a 'ubiquitous' search method that includes a collection of individual search methods, where each search method corresponds to a search provider. Thus, the search framework in effect customizes the call based on each search provider that is to perform a search based on the corresponding received search, sends the customized call to the web server which then calls same upon the search framework, and then executes the call by executing each search method within the call. As such, the search framework is closely involved with all aspects of the call and can control and monitor same. More importantly, the complexities of dealing with the possibly heterogeneous searches provided by search providers are avoided by the web server, which instead merely issues a single call as a ubiquitous search method that is employed to access all of the appropriate search providers in an appropriate manner.

The Braumandl reference discloses in pertinent part ubiquitous query processing on the Internet in which a client such as a web server can execute complex queries involving execution at multiple heterogeneous data sources, as is the case with the invention of the present application. As best shown in Fig. 2 and set forth in connection with section 2.2, data providers provide the data and function providers provide functions for accessing the data from the data providers in particular formats, all according to a query plan compiled based on a particular search request.

Significantly, the Braumandl query plan is generated by a lookup service that parses the search request and then searches for relevant data sources in a meta-data repository. Notably, though, although the Braumandl lookup service is akin to the search framework of the present invention, such lookup service is not disclosed as detecting a request to the Braumandl client for a search on one or more selected search providers, as is required by the claims of the present application. Likewise, the Braumandl lookup service does not in response to such detected search provide to the client a ubiquitous search method for performing the search at each search provider, as is also required by the claims of the present application, and does not respond to a call from the client to the ubiquitous search method by performing the search on the selected search providers, as is required by the claims of the present application.

Instead, and at most, the Braumandl client calls to the lookup service for a query plan, after which the lookup service is no longer involved in the search. Thus, and unlike the search framework of the claims of the present application, the Braumandl lookup service is not closely involved with all aspects of the call and cannot control and monitor same.

Thus, inasmuch as the Braumandl lookup service does not provide all the functions of the search framework as recited in the claims of the present application, Applicants respectfully submit that the Braumandl reference cannot be said to disclose all of the recited features of the claims of the present application. As a result, Applicants respectfully submit that the Braumandl reference does not anticipate the claims of the present application and accordingly Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 102 rejection.

In view of the foregoing discussion, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application including claims 1-8 and 12-16 is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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